

MICHAEL MEEHAN.

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APRIL 28, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. DRIGGS, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9593.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9593) granting an increase of pension to Michael Meehan, have considered the same and the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill as amended proposes to increase from \$10 to \$30 per month the pension of Michael Meehan, of Binghamton, N. Y.

This soldier enlisted August 7, 1862, and served as private in Company A, One hundred and seventh New York Volunteer Infantry, to June 5, 1865, when he was honorably discharged.

He was pensioned under the general law from June 6, 1865, to July 16, 1884, at \$4 per month for disease of gums and skin, the results of scurvy contracted in the service and in line of duty. Applications for increase under the general law not having been acted upon, he filed an application for a pension under the act of June 27, 1890, alleging the same disabilities and also disabilities arising from the loss of the fingers of one hand by an accident occurring since the close of the war. He is now drawing a pension of \$10 per month under that act.

The soldier is now 65 years of age, totally disabled from the performance of any labor whatever, and is very poor. He has no one upon whom he can rely for support. It appears from the records and evidence, and is not disputed, that at Atlanta, Ga., about August 1, 1864, the soldier was confined to the hospital, suffering from scurvy, resulting in a rash or erysipelas sores, and which disease and disabilities were incurred in the service. He was sent to the hospital July 16, 1864, and returned to duty November 3, 1864. It is proved by an abundance of uncontroverted evidence that while the soldier at times somewhat improved, he did not recover, and that after a little he grew much worse and the disability has increased until the soldier is now a wreck.

It should be stated that the hospital records show that the soldier was treated for scurvy while in the hospital, so that there is no possible doubt that his disabilities, aside from the loss of fingers above referred

to, were incurred in the service and in line of duty. In fact, they have been so accepted. The proof shows that the soldier is and always has been a strictly temperate and moral man and that none of his disabilities are due to vicious habits. Dr. J. G. Orton, examining surgeon, states that "the evidences of scurvy are apparent," and he describes the evidences. Examining boards at Binghamton, N. Y., Norwich, N. Y., and another board at Binghamton, N. Y., at a later date, and still another board at Binghamton, N. Y., at a still later date, all agree that the soldier's disabilities are the result of scurvy and not due to vicious habits, and that there is no evidence of vicious habits. It appears that the soldier suffers and has for many years suffered from sciatica or rheumatism, also contracted in the service.

The board says:

General appearance unhealthy, muscles flabby, skin pale, tongue coated, disease of gums and skin, gums are shrunk away from teeth, five teeth are out and several are loose and blackened, body covered with numerous scars indicating results of scurvy, sciatica, or rheumatism; crepitis in right hip, both shoulders, both elbows and both kneejoints; tenderness over sciatic nerve of right side.

Other resulting conditions are described in detail. These statements of the boards of examining surgeons are fully sustained and borne out by the evidence of neighbors and friends of the soldier of the highest credibility, one of whom is the reporter of the supreme court in the sixth judicial district, State of New York, and all agree that the soldier is a good citizen, of temperate habits, and of good moral character. The examining board August 24, 1897, give a rating of \$24 per month, excluding the loss of the fingers of the right hand, and of \$32 per month including that disability.

The soldier is now suffering also from chronic catarrh of the bladder, enlargement of the prostate gland, and much of the time is unable to urinate without the use of a catheter. Heart action is also seriously affected and his lungs are diseased. These conditions may be the results of scurvy and rheumatism.

It is evident that the soldier is a physical wreck, old, and unable to earn anything in any way. Evidence of witnesses and the report of a board of medical examiners filed in August, 1897, show the above conditions, and action by the Bureau has been repeatedly asked. The evidence filed is abundant and conclusive. There is no pretense of any fraud or concealment or that the examining boards were in any way prejudiced.

The soldier requires frequent aid and attendance, but perhaps it would be too much to say that he requires the frequent and periodical aid and attendance of another person. He certainly suffers a disability of service origin that entitles him to a pension of \$30 per month, without adding anything for the disability arising from the loss of his fingers, a disability not incurred in the service.

In view of the long and faithful service of the soldier, the fact that the main disabilities were concededly incurred in the service, and that he is totally disabled, the bill is reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

In line 8 strike out the word "fifty" and insert in lieu thereof the word "thirty."